



April 24, 2020

Dear Kentucky Licensees and Physical Therapy Patients,

With a rapidly changing dynamic, just yesterday Governor Beshear announced that physical therapy settings are included in the reopening of health care services effective Monday, April 27, 2020. Although very specific guidance has been provided, this guidance does **not** apply to physical therapy settings in long-term care, prisons, or other industries/settings for which separate guidance has already been provided or will be provided in the future.

The following guidance, accessed [here](#), must be observed:

1. Maximize telehealth rather than in-person services;
2. Prohibit visitors allowed except when necessary for end-of-life, vulnerable population, minors, etc. and then only to minimum essential extent;
3. Eliminate traditional waiting/common seating arenas and use non-traditional alternative (e.g., parking lot lobby);
4. Maintain social distancing greater than six feet in all settings where people must wait and employ other steps to minimize direct contact between individuals within the health care setting;
5. Screen all health care workers, patients, and others for temperature and COVID-19 symptoms upon arrival for shift or visit. Require staff to stay home if sick;
6. Plan for and ensure enhanced workplace sanitizing;
7. Plan for and ensure enhanced hand hygiene (washing and sanitizing) compliance;
8. Provide easily accessible hand sanitizer throughout the office/building;
9. Procure necessary PPE via normal supply chains;
10. All health care providers and staff must wear a surgical/procedural mask while in a health care office/facility;
11. All patients and other persons in health care office/facility must wear a surgical/procedural mask while in the acute care hospital or ambulatory surgical center; and
12. Patients in all other health care settings may wear either a surgical/procedural mask or cloth mask/face covering.

Specifically, the guidance to physical therapists categorizes physical therapy facilities as “high touch clinical settings” with a therapist only to treat one patient at a time. In high touch clinical settings, *all* health care workers must wear non-latex gloves in addition to implementing enhanced hygiene practices. Moreover, any objects and contact surfaces used for clinical services must be sanitized between patients.

I again want to reiterate that in no way is this a return to “business as usual.” As emphasized by Dr. Steven Stack, Commissioner for the Department for Public Health, “this is intended to be a phased, gradual reopening so that we can do this thoughtfully, safely, and see the consequences of our actions to make the necessary adjustments.” These guidelines are mandatory and must be followed in re-opening our physical therapy clinic settings to non-urgent and emergent patient populations. Governor Beshear has entrusted physical therapists and the entire medical community to prove that this can be done the right way, and to serve as a proof of concept for these measures throughout the state and across business platforms. The Governor also cautioned the disciplines within the medical community that non-compliance with these guidelines may result in a return to more restrictive measures in the interest of public safety.

Our Board has great confidence in the professionalism, training, and integrity of our outstanding physical therapists and physical therapist assistants across the Commonwealth, and we know that you will set a high standard for others to follow.

I personally want to thank Governor Beshear, DPH Commissioner Dr. Steven Stack, Inspector General Adam Mather, the staff with the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, and our distinguished legislators for their ongoing leadership and guidance provided to the therapeutic community during this challenging recovery period.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Pennington". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tom A. Pennington  
KBPT Board Chair

[CDC COVID-19](#)  
[KDPH COVID-19](#)